

THE SIN OFFERING FOR THE COMMON PEOPLE NO. 1048

**A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 28, 1872,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

"And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he does somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty; or if his sin, which he has sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has sinned. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering. And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar. And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savor unto the LORD; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him."

Leviticus 4:27-31.

VERY much of interesting truth clusters around the sin offering. The type is well worthy of the most careful consideration, and I regret that we shall not have time this morning to enter into all its details. The reader of the chapter will perceive that it gives us four forms of the same sacrifice. These may be regarded as four views of the same thing, probably views taken by four classes of believers, according to their standing in the divine life, for, although all men who are saved have the same Savior, they have not the same apprehensions of Him. We are all cleansed, if cleansed at all, by the same blood, but we have not all the same knowledge of the manner in which it is effectual for cleansing. The devout Hebrew had but one sin offering, but that was set forth to him under varying symbols.

The following remarks may aid you in understanding the type before us. The chapter begins with the sin offering for the anointed priest, and describes it with the fullest detail. It then proceeds, in the thirteenth verse and onwards, to give the sin offering for the whole congregation, and it is most notable that the sin offering for the anointed priest is almost in every circumstance identical with the sin offering for the whole congregation. Is not this designed to show to us that when Christ, our anointed priest, took upon Him the sin of all the congregation of God's chosen as His own, there was demanded of Him the same expiation and atonement as would have been demanded of His people had they been reckoned with in their own persons?

His atonement for sins which were not His own, but which were laid upon Him by the Lord on our behalf, is equivalent to the penalty which would have been required of all the congregation of believers for whom His blood was especially shed. This is a memorable lesson, which ought not to be forgotten. We ought to see herein the inestimable value of the sacrifice of Christ, by which the many offenses of a number that no man can number are forever put away. There was given, in the death of our Lord, as full a recompense to justice as if all the redeemed had been sent into hell, nay, the truth goes far further than that, they could not have made a complete expiation, for even had they suffered for sin for thousands of years, the debt would "still be paying, never paid." Glory be to the name of our great Substitute, He by His sin offering has perfected forever them that are set apart.

In the case of the sin offering for the priest we have a fuller picture of the atonement than is offered by the two latter instances, and you will please note that the sin offering was a victim without blemish. In the first two cases a bullock was to be slain. Thus the most precious animal the Hebrew owned, the noblest, the strongest, the image of docility and labor, was to be presented to make atonement. Our Lord

Jesus Christ is like the firstling of the bullock, the most precious thing in heaven, strong for service, docile in obedience, one who was willing and able to labor for our sakes, and He was brought as a perfect victim, without spot or blemish, to suffer in our stead. The priest slew the bullock, and its blood was poured forth, for without shedding of blood there is no remission. The vital point of the atonement of Christ lies in His death. However much His life may have contributed to it, and we are not among those who, in the matter of salvation, separate His life from His death by a hard and fast line, yet the great point of the putting away of human guilt was the Lord's obedience unto death, even the death of the cross. The victim was slain, and so the atonement was made.

Returning to the passage before us, we find that the blood of this victim was taken into the holy place, which was immediately outside the sacred veil of the sanctuary, and there the priest dipped his finger in the blood, and sprinkled of the blood seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary. So in making atonement for sin there is a perfect exhibition of the blood of Jesus before the Lord. That life has been given for life is openly proved where alone the proof is available. Before the offended Lord, the vicarious death is thoroughly exhibited, for was it not written of old in the book of Exodus, "When I see the blood I will pass over you"? Our sight of the blood Christ gives us peace, but it does not make the satisfaction, it is God's sight of the blood which makes the atonement, and therefore, seven times before the veil was this blood exhibited before the Lord, that a perfect atonement might be made.

The next thing the priest did was to go up to the golden altar of incense, which stood hard by the veil, and put some of the blood upon each one of the horns, indicating that it is the blood of the atonement which gives power (for that is the meaning of the horns) to intercession. The sweet perfume of the altar of incense stands for the prayers and praises of the saints, and especially for the intercession of Christ Jesus, and because the blood is there, Christ's intercession is heard, and therefore, our prayers and praises come up with acceptance before the Lord.

Then the priest removed to the brazen altar of burnt sacrifice, and all the blood which remained he poured out at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering which stood at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Full bowls of blood encrimsoned the base of the altar. Blood was seen on every side, on the veil, on the golden altar, and now upon the altar of brass. Within and without the holy place but one voice was heard, the voice of the blood of atonement crying to God for peace. The whole tabernacle must have been almost at all times so smeared with blood as to have been far from pleasant to the eye, and this was intended to teach Israel that God's anger against sin is terrible, and that the dishonored law will be satisfied with nothing less than the giving of life for life, if sinners are to be saved.

The altar of burnt offerings was the altar of acceptance, it was the place where those sacrifices were presented in which there was no mention of sin, but which were brought as thanksgivings to God. Therefore, as much as to teach us that the very ground and foundation of the acceptance of the Christian, and his offering, lies in the precious blood of Jesus, full bowls of blood were poured upon the base of the altar. See what wonders the precious blood of Jesus Christ can do, it is the strength of intercession and the foundation of acceptance.

From the bullock which had been slain certain choice pieces were taken, and especially the inward fat, and these were laid upon the altar and consumed, to show us that even while the Lord Jesus was a sin offering He was still accepted of God, and though His Father forsook Him so that He cried out, "Why have you forsaken me?" He was still a sweet savor unto the Lord in the obedience which He rendered.

But, the most significant part of the whole sacrifice remains to be described, and you will notice that it is only described in the first two forms of the sin offering. The priest was not allowed to burn the bullock itself upon the altar, but he was commanded to take up the whole carcass, its skin, flesh, head, and everything, and carry the whole without the camp. It was a sin offering, and therefore it was loathsome in God's sight, and the priest went right away from the door of the tabernacle, past all the tents of the children of Israel, bearing this ghastly burden upon him, went, I say, right away, till he came

to the place where the ashes of the camp were poured out, and there, not upon an altar, but on wood which had been prepared upon the bare ground, every single particle of the bullock was burned with fire. The distance the bullock was carried from camp is said to have been four miles. The teaching of which is just this, that when the Lord Jesus Christ took the sins of His people upon Himself, He could not, as a substitute, dwell any longer in the place of the divine favor, but had to be put into the place of separation, and made to cry, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews puts the matter clearly, "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."

Outside Jerusalem our Lord was led to the common place of doom for malefactors, for it is written (and oh, the power of those words, I dare not have uttered them if they had not been inspired), "He was made a curse for us, for it is written, cursed is every one that hangs on a tree." The blessed Son of God was made a curse for us and put to an accursed death, by being gibbeted upon the cross and all because sin anywhere is hateful to God, and He must treat it with indignation. The fire of divine justice fell upon our blessed sin offering until He was utterly consumed with anguish, and He said, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost.

Now this is the only way of putting away sin, it is laid upon another, that other is made to suffer as if the sin belonged to him, and then, since sin cannot be in two places at once, and cannot be laid upon another and rest upon the offerer too, the offerer becomes clear from all sin, he is pardoned and he is accepted because his substitute has been slain without the camp instead of him. I have thus introduced to you the first two forms of the sin offering. It seemed necessary to begin there.

The third form of the sin offering was for a ruler, a person of considerable standing in the camp. There is nothing very remarkable about that third form which need now detain us, we therefore, come to the subject in hand. The sin offering for a common person.

I. And here, we will begin our discourse upon the text itself by speaking of THE PERSON, *a common person*.

It gives me unspeakable joy to read these words, "If any one of the common people sin," for which one of the common people does not sin? The text reminds me that *if a common person sins his sins will ruin him*, he may not be able to do as much mischief by his sin as the ruler or a public officer, but his sin has all the essence of evil in it, and God will reckon with him for it. No matter how obscurely you may live, however poor and unlettered you may be, your sin will ruin you, if not pardoned and put away.

If one of the common people sins through ignorance, his sin is a damning sin, he must have it put away, or it will put him away forever from the face of God. *A common person's sin can only be removed by an atonement of blood.* In this case you see the victim was not a bullock, it was a female of the goats or of the sheep, but still it had to be an offering of blood, for without shedding of blood there is no remission. However commonplace your offenses may have been, however insignificant you may be yourself, nothing will cleanse you but the blood of Jesus Christ. That verse is quite correct—

*"Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone:
Christ must save, and Christ alone."*

It is true the sins of great men cover a larger space, but yet there must be a bloody sacrifice for the smallest offenses. For the sins of a housewife or of a servant, of a peasant, or of a crossing-sweeper, there must be the same sacrifice as for the sins of the greatest and most influential. No other atonement will suffice, the sins of the common people will destroy them unless the blood of Jesus Christ shall cleanse them. But here is the point of joy, that *for the common people there was an atonement ordained of God.* Glory be to God I may be unknown to men, but I am not unthought of by Him. I may be merely

one of the many, but still He has thought of me. As each blade of grass has its own drop of dew, so each guilty soul coming to Christ shall find atonement for itself in Christ. Blessed be the name of the Lord, it is not written that there is a sacrifice for the great ones of the earth alone, but for the common people there is a sin offering, so that each man coming to the Savior finds cleansing through His precious blood.

Observe with thankfulness that *the sacrifice appointed for the common people was as much accepted as that appointed for the ruler*. Of the ruler, it is said, “The priest shall make atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.” The same thing is said of the common person. Christ is as much accepted for the poorest of His people as for the richest of them. He as much saves the unknown as He does the apostolic names of high renown. They need the sacrifice of blood, but they need nothing more, and the blood which pleads before the throne of God speaks as well for the least as it does for the chief of the flock.

Come hither, then, you who belong to the common people, if any of you have sinned, come at once to Jesus, the great sin offering. Though you are common in rank, know you not that the common people heard Him gladly? Publicans and sinners pressed around Him to hear Him. Though you are but commoners in your wealth, possessing little of this world’s goods, yet, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Common in your talents and in your gifts, yet He bids you come, for these things are hid from the wise and prudent. It is not for those who think themselves distinguished that He has especially laid down His life, but “the poor have the gospel preached to them,” and in their salvation He will be glorified.

Mark, it says, “If any one of the common people sin through ignorance, or if his sin which he has sinned comes to his knowledge, then he shall bring his offering.” Has it suddenly come to the knowledge of any person here that he has sinned as he thought he had not sinned? Has some fresh light broken in upon you and revealed to you your darkness? Did you come to this house depressed in spirit because you have discovered that you are guilty and must perish, unless the mercy of God prevent you? Then, come you common people who have discovered your sin, and bring your sacrifice. Nay, it is here already for you. Come and accept the sacrifice which God provides, and let your sin be forever put away.

I wish the words of the text could provoke the same feelings in every heart that they do in mine, for I could fain stand here and weep my soul away in joy that for the common people’s sin there should be a sacrifice, for I can put my name down amongst them. I have sinned, I have come to the knowledge of my sin, and I thank God I need not ask myself any other question, be I who I may or what I am, though but one of the common people, there is a sin offering for me.

II. Now, pass on from the person to THE SACRIFICE.

“He shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has sinned.”

Observe first, my brethren, that there is a discrepancy between the type and the reality, for first *the sin offering under the law was only for sins of ignorance*. But we have a far better sacrifice for sin than that, for have we not read in your hearing this morning those precious words, “The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from *all* sin,” not from sins of ignorance only, but from *all* sin.

Oh, that blessed word “all.” It includes sins of knowledge, sins against the light and love of God, sins wantonly perpetrated, sins against man and against God, sins of body and of soul, sins of thought and word and deed, sins of every rank and character, “sins immense as is the sea”—all, all are removed, no matter what they be, “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from *all* sin.”

Yet do I bless God that the type deals with sins of ignorance because we may get a Gospel out of it. We have committed many sins which we know not of. They have never burdened our conscience because we have not yet discovered them, and besides, we do not know them to be sins, but Christ takes those sins too, and prays, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” “Cleanse you me,” said David, “from secret faults,” and that is just what Jesus does.

It used to be a doctrine of the Church of Rome that no man could have a sin forgiven which he did not confess. Truly, if it were so, there would be no salvation for any of us, since it is not possible for the memory to charge itself with the recollection of every sin, nor for the conscience to become so perfect as to take cognizance of every form of transgression. But while we ought to confess to God all sins which we know, and while we should confess them as much as can be in detail, yet, if through ignorance they remain unacknowledged, except in the gross and the bulk, Jesus Christ, the sin offering, bears our sins of ignorance, sins which we knew not to be sins when we committed them, or which we still know not to be sins. He takes them away, it must be so, for He “cleanses us from *all sin*”—sins of ignorance, as well as sins against light and knowledge.

Now, what comfort there is here for all you of the common people, be your sins what they may, there is a sin offering which takes away all sin from you. However you may have defiled yourselves, though you be black as night and hideous as hell, yet is there power in the atoning blood of the incarnate God to make you white as newly-fallen snow. Washed once in the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, there shall remain upon you no trace of guilt.

Note another discrepancy, *the sinner of the common people in this case had to bring his sacrifice*—“he shall *bring* his offering.” But our sin offering has been provided for us. You remember the question of Isaac to his father Abraham, as they went up Moriah, he said to him, “My father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” and Abraham said, “My son, God will provide himself a lamb.” Isaac’s inquiry might have been the eternal question of every troubled heart, “O God, where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” Who will bear human sin? But JEHOVAH JIREH. God has provided Himself a lamb for a burnt offering and a sin offering too, and now we have not to bring a sacrifice for sin, but have simply to take what God provided from before the foundations of the world.

Now, let us notice that in the type *the victim chosen for a sin offering was unblemished*, whether it was a goat or a sheep, it must be unblemished. How could Christ make an atonement for sins if He had had sins of His own. Had He been guilty, it would have required that He should suffer for His own guilt. But being under no obligation whatever to the law of God, except such as He voluntarily undertook, when He had rendered obedience He had an obedience to give away, and He has graciously bestowed it upon us.

When He suffered, His suffering not being due to God on account of anything that He had personally done, He had much suffering to spare, and He has transferred it to us. The immaculate Christ has died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. This is full of comfort, for if you will study, O seeking soul, the perfect character of your blessed Lord as God, and as man, and see how fairer than the lilies is He in matchless purity, you will feel that if He suffered, there must be in such suffering a merit unspeakable, which being transferred to you, can save you from the wrath to come. In the dear Redeemer we have an unblemished sacrifice.

But I do not understand, and therefore, cannot explain why the victim was a female in this case, for most of the sacrifices were males of the first year, but this is peculiar in being a female. Is it because there is neither male nor female, bond nor free, but all are one in Christ Jesus? Or, am I wrong if I conjecture that this was intended to typify a view of Christ taken by one of the common people, and therefore it is purposely made incomplete? It is an incomplete view of Christ to have before you the female as the type, and the type is purposely made incomplete in order that this truth may lie before us—that while a complete view of Christ is very comforting, instructive, and strengthening, yet even an imperfect view of Him will save us if accompanied by real faith.

If we should make a mistake upon some point, yet, if we are clear upon the main truth of His substitution, it is well with us. On purpose, then, it seems to me, that a victim was introduced which did not with exactness set forth Christ, that the Lord might say to His people and to us, “You have not reached the perfect conception of My dear Son, but even an imperfect apprehension of Him will save you if you believe in Him.”

Who among us knows much of Christ? Oh, brethren, we know enough to make our hearts love Him, we know enough of Him to make us feel that we owe all to Him, and we desire to live for His glory, but He is far greater than our greatest thoughts. We have only skirted the shores and navigated the little bays and creeks of Christ, we have not sailed out into the main ocean, nor fathomed the great deeps as yet. Yet what little we know of Him has saved us, and for His dear sake we are forgiven and accepted in the Beloved. Does not the Lord seem to say to us, "Poor souls, you have misconceived My Son, and made many mistakes about Him, but you do trust Him, and so I save you."

A certain woman thought that there was power in the hem of Jesus' garment to make her whole. She was mistaken in imagining that there was a healing efficacy in His dress, but since it was a mistake of faith, and reflected honor upon Christ, the Lord made it true to her, He made virtue go out of Himself even into the skirts of His garments for her sake. And so, though we may err here and err there in reference to our Lord, yet, if our soul does but cling to Him like a child to its mother, knowing little of its mother except that its mother loves it, and that it is dependent upon her, that clinging will be saving.

But the main point about the sacrifice was, it was *slain as a substitute*. There is nothing said about its being taken outside the camp—I do not think it was in this case, all that the offerer knew was, it was slain as a substitute. And dear hearers, all and everything that is essential to know in order to be saved is to know that you are a sinner and that Christ is your substitute. I beseech the Lord to teach every one of us this, for though we should go to the University and learn all knowledge, though we should ransack all the stores of learning, unless we know this—"He loved me and gave himself for me," we have not learned the very first principles of a true education for eternity. God gives us to know this this very day.

III. But now thirdly, we pass on from the sacrifice to THE AFTER CEREMONIES, upon which only a word.

In the case of one of the common people after the victim was slain, the blood was taken to the brazen altar, and the four horns of it were smeared, to show that the power of fellowship with God lies in the blood of substitution. There is no fellowship with God except through the blood, there is no acceptance with God for anyone of us except through Him who suffered in our stead.

But then secondly, the blood was thrown at the feet of this same brazen altar, as if to show that the atonement is the foundation as well as the power of fellowship. We get nearest to God when we feel most the power of the blood, ay, and we could not come to God at all except it were through that encrimsoned way.

After this, a part of the offering was put upon the altar, and it is said concerning it, what is not said in any other of the cases, "The priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savor to the LORD." This common person had, in most respects, a dim view of Christ, compared with the others, but yet there were some points in which he had more light than others, for it does not say of the priest that what he offered was a sweet savor, but for the comfort of this common person, that he might go his way having sweet consolation in his soul, he is told that the sin offering he has brought is a sweet savor unto God.

And oh, what a joy it is to think not only has Christ put away my sin if I believe in Him, but now for me He is a sweet savor to God, and I am for His sake accepted, for His sake beloved, for His sake delighted in, for His sake precious unto God. When God had destroyed the earth by a flood, and Noah came out of the ark, you will remember that he offered a sacrifice unto God, and it is said, "The LORD smelled a sweet savor," or a savor of rest, and then He said I will no more destroy the earth with a flood, and He entered into a covenant with Noah. Oh, happy is that soul that can see Christ his sin offering, as being a savor of rest unto the Lord Most High, so that a covenant of grace is made with him, a covenant of sure mercies that shall never be removed.

But I must pass on again.

IV. The fourth point is one to which I ask all your heart's attention. I have purposely omitted AN ESSENTIAL ACT in the sacrifice, in order to enlarge upon it now.

Please observe that in all four cases there was one thing which was never left out, "He shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering." It was no use killing the bullock, it was no use slaying the

heifer, no use pouring out the blood, or smearing the horns of the altar unless this was done. The guilty person must come, and must himself lay his hands upon the victim. Oh, that while I speak of this, some of you may lay your hands upon Christ Jesus, according to the verse of the poet—

*"My faith doth lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin."*

Now, that act of laying on the hand signified *confession*. It meant just this, "Here I stand as a sinner, and confess that I deserve to die. This goat which is now to be slain represents in its sufferings what I deserve of God." O sinner, confess your sin now unto your great God, acknowledge that He would be just if He condemned you. Confession of sin is a part of the meaning of laying on of the hand.

The next thing that was meant by it was *acceptance*. The person laying his hand said, "I accept this goat as standing for me. I agree that this victim shall stand instead of me." That is what faith does with Christ, it puts its hand upon the ever blessed Son of God, and says, "He stands for me, I take Him as my substitute."

The next meaning of it was *transference*. The sinner standing there confessing, putting his hand on the victim and accepting it, did by that act say, "I transfer, according to God's ordinance, all my sin which I here confess, from myself to this victim." By that act the transference was made. You know there is a blessed passage which says that "The Lord has laid on Christ the iniquity of us all," from this expression an objection has been raised to that blessed hymn—

"I lay my sins on Jesus."

Yet, I think, the expression is quite correct. Cannot both utterances be true? God did lay sin in bulk upon Christ when He laid upon Him the iniquity of us all, but by an act of faith every individual in another sense lays his sins on Jesus, and it is absolutely needful that each man should so do, if he would participate in the substitution.

Now, do observe I pray you, that this was a *personal act*. Nobody could lay his hand upon the bullock, or upon the goat, for another, each one had to put his own hand there. A godly mother could not say, "My graceless boy will not lay his hand upon the victim, but I will put my hand there for him." It could not be. He who laid his hand there had the blessing, but no one else, and had the godliest saint with holy but mistaken zeal said, "Rebellious man, will you not put your hand there, I will act as sponsor for you," it had been of no avail, the offender must personally come.

And so, dear hearer, must you have a personal faith in Christ for yourself. The word is sometimes interpreted to *lean*, and some give it the meaning, of leaning hard. What a blessed view of faith that gives us. Sometimes, according to the Rabbis, those who brought the victim leaned with all their might, and pressed upon it as if they seemed to say by the act, "I put the whole burden, weight, and force of my sin upon this unblemished victim." O my soul, lean hard on Christ, throw all the weight of your sin upon Him, for He is able to bear it, and came on purpose to bear it, and He will be honored if you will lean heavily on Him.

And beloved, what a *simple act* it was. The man who would not be absolved from sin in this way deserved to perish—there was nothing but to lay his hand, nothing but to lean, how could he refuse. Faith in Christ is no mystery, no problem needing to be explained in long treatises—it is simply, trust Him, trust Him, trust Him, and you are saved. "There is life in a look at the crucified One." "Look unto Him, and be you saved all the ends of the earth." Nothing can be plainer—nothing can be simpler—why is it that so many puzzle themselves where God has given us simplicities. It must be that God made man upright, but he has found out many inventions with which to bewilder himself.

The laying on of the hand was *the act of a sinner*. He came there because he had sinned, and because his sin had come to his knowledge. Had he been sinless there would have been no meaning in his bringing a sin offering. Innocence needs not a substitute or sacrifice for sin. The sin offering is evidently for the man who has sin, and what if I say there is no soul here to whom Christ is as suitable as the soul that is most full of sin. You that are a great, big, black sinner, a thorough-paced sinner, a damnable sinner, you are the very sinner to come to Christ and glorify His grace. He is a Physician who did not come into this world to cure finger aches, and pinpricks, but to heal great diseases, loathsome leprosies, and burning fevers. Come, you sinner of the common people, come you and rest alone on Jesus! I wish I knew how to speak of this theme so as to move your souls.

Within a few months or years at the longest, we shall all be before the bar of God, and what if some of us should be there with our sins upon us? I am afraid some of you will be there unforgiven. O you to whom I have so often spoken, will you be there unpardoned! I shall not be able to make excuses for you there, and say you did not know the way of salvation, for I have preached it with great plainness of speech. I have often cast aside language which commended itself to my taste, to use instead thereof more homely words, lest one of you should miss my meaning.

God knows I have often forsaken tracks of thought which opened before me, and which might have interested many of my hearers, because I have felt while so many of you are unsaved, I must keep on plowing with simplicities, and sowing elementary truths. I am evermore telling over and over again the story of the substitutionary work of the Lord Jesus. What, do you hate your souls so much that you will damn them to spite Christ? Is there such a hatred between you and yourself that you will reject God's own sacrifice for sin? You cannot say it is difficult for you to avail yourself of the death of Jesus. It is but to lay your hand of faith on that dear head. What enmity must there be in your hearts that you will not be reconciled to God even when He makes the reconciliation by the death of His own dear Son. To what a pitch has man's rebellion against his Maker gone, when, sooner than be at peace with Him, he will reject eternal love, and will forever ruin his own soul.

Oh, may God grant that some this morning may say, "I will stretch out my hand, I will trust in Jesus." You see that the hand to be stretched out is an empty one, and the heart which leans may be a fainting one. Weakness and sinfulness find strength and pardon by taking Jesus to be their All-in-all.

V. The last word I have to speak to you makes the fifth head, namely, THE ASSURED BLESSING.

Turn to your Bibles, at the thirty-first verse, let every soul here that is conscious of sin read those last lines, "*and it shall be forgiven him.*" There is the sacrifice. The man must put his hand upon it. The sacrifice is slain, and "*his sin shall be forgiven him.*" Was not that plain speaking? There were no ifs, no buts, no peradventures, but "*it shall be forgiven him.*"

Now, in those days it was only one sin, the sin confessed, that was forgiven, but now "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." In those days the forgiveness did not give the conscience abiding peace, for the offerer had to come with another sacrifice by and by, but now the blood of Christ blots out all the sins of believers at once and forever, so that there is no need to bring a new sacrifice, or to come a second time with the blood of atonement in our hands. The sacrifice of the Jew had no intrinsic value. How could the blood of bulls and goats take away sin? It could only be useful as a type of the true sacrifice, the sin offering of Christ. But in our Lord Jesus there is real efficacy, there is true atonement, there is real cleansing, and whosoever believes in Him shall find actual pardon and complete forgiveness at this very moment. What a joy it is to know that—

*"The moment a sinner believes,
And trusts in his crucified God,
His pardon at once he receives,
Salvation in full through His blood."*

I delight to believe that of Christ Jesus Kent's verse is true—

***"Here's pardon for transgressions past,
It matters not how black their cast,
And oh, my soul, with wonder view,
For sins to come here's pardon too."***

Our sins were all laid on Christ in one bulk, and were all put away at one time. Woe unto any man who should have to take his sins upon himself as they come, the blessing is that as our sins are committed they are still laid on Jesus, according to the words of the psalmist, "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whom there is no guile." The believer sins, but the Lord imputes not his sin to him, he lays it still upon the scapegoat's head who bore our sins of old, even Christ Jesus our Savior.

The pith of all my discourse is this, if there be a child of God here who is in the dark and burdened with sin, dear brother, dear sister, do not stand controverting with the devil as to whether you are a child of God or not. Do not be going over your experience and saying, "I am afraid I am a hypocrite and I have been deceived." But for the moment, suppose the worst. Let the devil take for granted his accusations, and then reply to him in words like those of Martin Luther, "You say I am a great sinner, and a law-breaker, and all this, to which I reply I will cut your head off with your own sword, for what if I be a sinner? it is written Jesus Christ came to save sinners, and I rest my soul as a sinner simply upon Him."

I like beginning again. The best way to get back lost evidences is to leave the evidences alone, and go again to Jesus. Evidences are very like a sundial—you can tell what o'clock it is if the sun is shining, but not without, and truly a man of experience can tell the time of day without the sundial if he can but see the sun itself. Evidences are clearest when Jesus is near, and that is just the time when we do not need them. Here is God's direction for acting when under a cloud. "If any walk in darkness and see no light, let him"—what? Fret about his evidences? No, "Let him trust," there is the end of it, "let him trust in the Lord and obey the voice of his servant," and the light will soon come to him. Come away, O burdened believer, to the sin offering. "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father." The fountain that was opened for sin and for uncleanness was not opened for the unregenerate only, but for the people of God, for it was opened "In the house of David," for the "inhabitants of Jerusalem," that is, for those who are God's people.

If there be a poor soul here who has never believed in Jesus, but is burdened with sin, I invite him, and I pray God the Holy Spirit to make the invitation effectual, to come now to Jesus Christ. I think that when I was seeking the Savior, if I had been in this congregation, and had heard Christ set forth as bearing sin as a substitute, and heard the plain talk you have listened to this morning, I should have found peace directly, instead of which I was months and months hunting after peace, because I did not know this, that I had nothing to do, for Christ had done it all, and all I had to do was to take what Christ had done, and simply trust in Him.

Now, you know it, oh, may God add something to your knowledge! May He give you power to lay your hand on Jesus! Lean on Him, soul, lean on Him. If you cannot lean, fall back into His arms. Faint away upon the bosom of the Savior. Trust Him, rest in Him, it is all He asks you, and then faith shall justify you and cleanse you, and shall give you sanctification, and by and by perfection, and shall bring you into His eternal kingdom and glory. The Lord bless you, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 JOHN 1-2.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.